

ABSTRACT

A gateway may be used as a common entry point for a network. Subscribers may request network services through the gateway. The gateway may identify management entities that are appropriate for a particular subscriber's request by contacting a network information collector (NIC). The NIC may include one or more, possibly distributed, resolver components and information collection agents. The resolvers are responsible for the resolution process, which may be based on a resolution process that specifies resolution functions that are required to identify the management entities. The information collection agents may be customizable software agents that collect state information from other elements in the network.